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# MUSEUM MESSAGE March 2025

Flying  
Leatherneck  
Aviation Museum



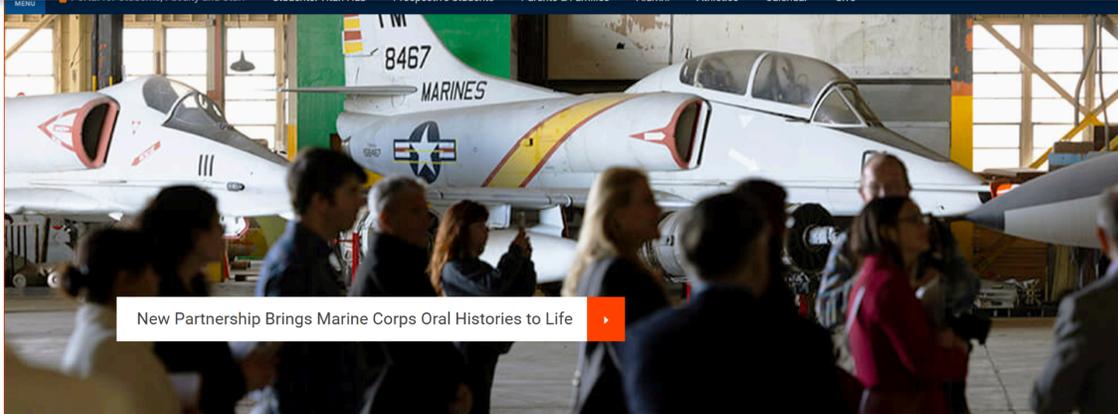
## Cal State Fullerton Visits the Hangar!

We're honored to be featured on the front page of the **California State University, Fullerton** website! 🎉 This incredible article highlights our partnership with CSUF's Lawrence de Graaf Center for Oral and Public History, which has preserved over 500 oral histories from those who served at Marine Corps Air Station El Toro.

One of these voices is Retired Marine Lt. Gen. Terry Robling, who recalled flying over orange groves and farmland in the early days of his Marine aviation career. His story, along with many others, will be brought to life in our future museum exhibits at Great Park in Irvine! 🏛️

A huge thank you to CSUF for donating these powerful stories to the museum, ensuring that the history, experiences, and sacrifices of Marine aviators are preserved for generations to come.

Check out the article [HERE](#)



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## Honoring Col. “Roller” Lady: A Legacy of Service and Sponsorship



The Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum is proud to recognize **Retired Marine Col. “Roller” Lady** for his generous sponsorship of our **A-4M Skyhawk**, an aircraft that played a vital role in Marine Corps aviation and represents the many A-4M aircraft he piloted during his distinguished military career. His contribution ensures that this legendary attack jet will be preserved and displayed, allowing visitors to learn about its rich history and the pilots who flew it in service to our country.

Col. Lady's **29 years of dedicated service** in both the **Marine Corps and Marine Corps Reserve** exemplify a career of leadership, excellence, and commitment to his fellow Marines. After enlisting through the **Platoon Leaders Class program in 1972**, he was commissioned as a Marine officer upon graduation from **Lycoming College in 1975**. He earned his **wings in 1977** and joined **VMA-211**, where he served as an **A-4 attack pilot**, amassing over **1,200 accident-free flight hours**. His expertise led him to serve as an **A-4 instructor in Pensacola**, where he trained the next generation of Marine aviators and

Throughout his career, Col. Lady took on pivotal leadership roles that extended beyond the cockpit. As a **Battalion Air Officer for 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines at Camp Pendleton**, he played a crucial role in coordinating air support for Marine ground operations. His service in the **Marine Corps Reserve** beginning in 1986 included key positions such as **Operations Officer for VMA-133 and flying another 1,000 hours in six years, Regimental Air Officer for 23rd Marines, Operations Officer for Mobilization Processing at MCAS El Toro**, where he oversaw the deployment readiness of reserve aviation personnel, and **G-5 Future Plans Officer for the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade**, working on critical military operations, including deployments to Korea and aboard the **USS Tarawa**.

Later in his career, Col. Lady was at the forefront of **Consequence Management and Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) response**. He worked with elite federal agencies, including the **FBI, FEMA, and the Defense Threat Reduction Agency**, and played a key role in shaping Marine Corps response strategies for national security threats. His expertise led him to participate in **joint military exercises at CENTCOM (Central Command) in Qatar and Kuwait**, ensuring Marine forces were prepared for modern threats. For his outstanding contributions, Col. Lady was awarded the **Meritorious Service Medal, Navy/Marine Achievement Medal, and numerous other commendations**.

Upon leaving active duty in the Marine Corps in 1986, Col. Lady transitioned to a successful civilian aviation career as a **Captain for American Airlines for 32.5 years**, logging over **24,600 accident-free flight hours**. His dedication to excellence earned him **two Letters of Commendation for "Service Above and Beyond"** from the airline. Even in retirement, his commitment to service has not wavered. He has been deeply involved in **charitable work**, supporting organizations such as **Toys for Tots, Food for the Hungry, The Little Angels Home for orphaned handicapped children, and local community initiatives**.

Col. Lady's sponsorship of the **A-4M Skyhawk** reflects his enduring passion for Marine Corps aviation and its history. His generosity ensures that future generations will have the opportunity to experience this remarkable aircraft and learn about the legacy of the Marines who flew it.

We are incredibly grateful for **Col. Lady's support, service, and dedication to preserving Marine Corps history**. His contributions, both in and out of uniform, embody the spirit of the Marine Corps and the mission of the Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum.

**Semper Fi, Colonel "Roller" Lady!**

SPONSOR YOUR VERY OWN AIRCRAFT TODAY

# Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum Featured on the Front Page of the Orange County Business Journal

National Heart Month UCI Health ucihealth.org/healthyheart

## ORANGE COUNTY BUSINESS JOURNAL

Vol. 48, No. 5 THE COMMUNITY OF BUSINESS™ February 3-9, 2025 • \$5.00

Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum is slated to return to OC in 2026



### The Return of El Toro

**Simon, Quilters Help Fund Leatherneck Museum Move**

■ By PARIMAL M. ROHIT

IRVINE — El Toro is back, at least as a museum, thanks to significant donations from Orange County entrepreneurs. A big piece of the former Marine Corps Air Station will be unveiled in the coming weeks when groundbreaking occurs on a \$60 million museum that features Orange County's contributions to the wars fought between the 1940s and 1980s. The Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum, which is scheduled to open in late 2026, will feature a wide variety of aircraft, from planes that took fire in World War II's Pacific Theater to the first jets ever in combat in Korea to a helicopter that helped people escape Saigon at the end of

See related charitable gift list Page 22

▶ Leatherneck 64

### Harbinger Raises \$100M Series B Round

**AUTOMOTIVE:** Doubles employee count to 300

■ By YUIKA YOSHIDA

GARDEN GROVE — Harbinger Motors Inc. raised a \$100 million Series B round to scale production for its electric truck and van platform, co-led by investors with ties to Tesla Inc. and the Volkswagen Group.



John Harris  
CEO  
Harbinger Motors

A large portion of the proceeds will go toward investments in costly activities like tooling and automation, according to Chief Executive John Harris.

Harbinger makes stripped chassis—the supporting frame and motor of the vehicle—to be custom-outfitted into delivery vans and other medium-duty electric trucks.

"This is really about continuing to improve the

▶ Harbinger 60

Authentic-acquired the new brands for \$1.2B in 2023



Exciting news! The *Orange County Business Journal* has spotlighted the Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum in a front-page feature, highlighting our return to Orange County and the incredible support that has made it possible. The article, titled **"The Return of El Toro,"** details the museum's upcoming relocation to the Great Park in Irvine, bringing a vital piece of Marine Corps aviation history back to its roots. With the generous backing of donors like the Ronald M. Simon Family Foundation and the Quilter family, we are one step closer to building a world-class museum dedicated to honoring Marine aviation and its legacy. In the feature, Flying Leatherneck Historical Foundation CEO Michael Aguilar shares his vision for the museum's new home, emphasizing hands-on, interactive experiences that will immerse visitors in the rich history of Marine Corps aviation. The article also highlights our collection of historic aircraft, including those that played critical roles in major conflicts from World War II through the Cold War.

continued support as we prepare for our grand reopening in 2026. To read the full article, visit the *Orange County Business Journal's* website: <https://www.ocbj.com/oc-homepage/flying-leatherneck-aviation-museum-returning-to-el-toro/>  
Stay tuned for more updates as we bring this vision to life!

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## A Visit from UCI Students and Faculty

Last month, we had the pleasure of welcoming **UCI students and faculty** at UC, Irvine to our hangar in Irvine! 🎓✈️ They got an exclusive look at the incredible progress we've made and the historic aircraft that will soon be on display at the Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum.

From up-close encounters with legendary warbirds to stepping back in time with Marine Corps aviation history, it was an unforgettable experience!





## Flying Leathernecks Aviation Museum Fundraising Goal

**\$60,000,000**



Thanks to the incredible generosity of our donors and supporters, the Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum has raised an impressive **\$43 million** toward our **\$60 million** goal! This funding is bringing us closer to building a world-class museum at the Great Park in Irvine, where we will honor Marine Corps aviation history and inspire future generations.

We are in the final stretch and need your support to reach the finish line! Every contribution brings us closer to creating an interactive and educational experience that will preserve the legacy of Marine aviation.

Join us in making history—donate today and help us reach our goal!

DONATE TODAY



## SPONSOR AN AIRCRAFT

### Do you have a special connection to a Marine Aircraft? Your support can help!

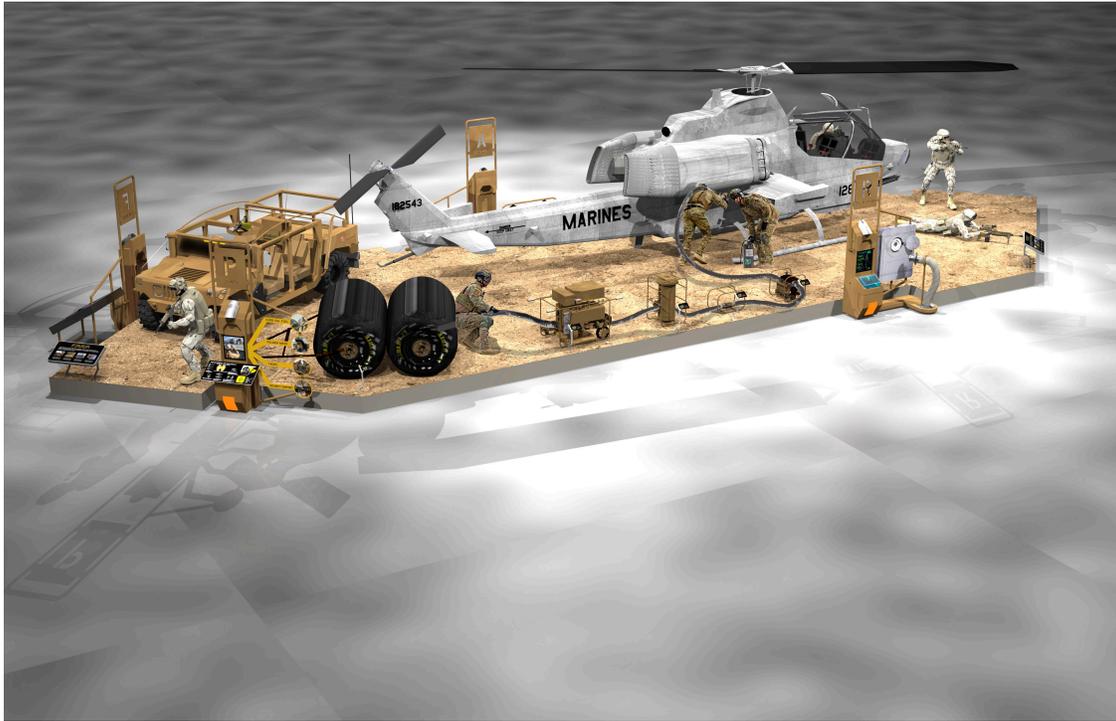
Each of our aircraft has a rich history and a story to tell. By supporting our restoration efforts, you contribute to preserving these flying legends for future generations. Your donation helps cover the costs of materials, labor, and expertise required to bring these historic aircraft back to their former glory.

Your support ensures that these iconic aircraft's legacy lives on. Together, we can honor the past and inspire the future.

Click below to search our inventory of 34 aircraft and make your donation for restoration today!

[CHECK OUT THE AIRCRAFT AVAILABLE FOR SUPPORT](#)

## STEAK PEEK INTO THE MUSEUM!



## Have you Become a Member Yet?

As we approach our grand opening in 2026, we invite you to join our Membership program. This exclusive group of supporters will play a crucial role in shaping the future of the museum and preserving the storied legacy of Marine Corps aviation. Get exclusive access, discounts and more!



[LEARN MORE](#)

## YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS....

Each month you'll discover the latest milestones we've achieved, meet some of the dedicated individuals making this vision a reality, and get a glimpse of what to expect when we open our doors. Your support and enthusiasm fuel our journey, and we can't wait to share more with you each step of the way.

Thank you for being a valued part of our community. Stay tuned for exciting news and exclusive previews!



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